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DR. WISE ON RACE IN MEDICINE.*

THE work before us affords a mine of matter interesting to the student of the history of medicine, and in the portion of it relating to the origin and progress of medicine among the Hindus, we find traced out the germs of ideas which were subsequented, appropriated, and developed by the great men who were the fathers of European medicine. A large proportion of the most ardent wooers of anthropology are found among the professors and practitioners of medicine, but it is not from their point of view that we propose to review this book ; and we shall here only say, with respect to its general merits, that the untiring industry and well-known and various learning of Dr. Wise are everywhere conspicuous therein.

But these two volumes, which deal with the history of medicine among the Hindus and other Asiatics, furnish many facts for the consideration of the anthropologist, which are almost wholly disconnected from the region of medicine. Take, for example, the following passage from the introduction :—

“The cultivation of the mind improves the character of a people ; and the difference is marked between the ancient and modern Hindu family of Aryan physicians, educated during many generations, and the barber-surgeons of the Turanian race, without any education. As the subject was important, I selected an educated Voidia physician, and a barber-surgeon, quite uneducated, from among my assistants when in India, in order to examine the difference. The former, who was named Neem Chaund Doss Gupta, belonged to one of the four Voidya classes, which Bullal-Sen, the great Voidya king, instituted. His family had been for many generations the chief physicians of the province he inhabited ; and, in his authenticated family history, it is stated that they have been from time immemorial distinguished as physicians. For fourteen generations particulars of each succeeding individual are given, which, allowing only twenty-three years for the length of each life, would carry back the history of the family for a period of more than three hundred years, to about the time of Telenga Mukund Deb, the last able and independent king of Orissa. After a brave resistance, that monarch was conquered by the Mussulmans, and the distinguished men he had employed about his court were dispersed. It was at this time that Narayan Doss Gupta distinguished himself by his learning, etc., etc. . . . His son, and seven of his successors, supported a gratuitous Sanskrit school, in which the medical shasters were taught. . . . The thirteenth was physician to Rajah Roybullah. . . . His son, Neem Chaund Doss, was my friend, the fourteenth of

* *History of Medicine*, by Thomas A. Wise, M.D., etc., etc., vols. i and ii. London : Churchill.

this honourable list. In order to study the English system of medicine, he attended regularly the Dacca Dispensary and Hospital, and there he attracted my notice by his diligence and attention, and by his great intelligence and industry. I procured for him a situation under Government, with a small salary sufficient for his humble wants, and modest and retiring habits. He had an accurate and extensive knowledge of the medical shastres, a great part of which he knew by heart ; and quickly distinguished himself in practice, by his activity and correctness, and by the judgment he displayed in the treatment of disease.

"To mark the effect of the pursuit of learning, during so many generations, and of the want of education, on the physical organisation of the Asiatic, I sketched the profiles of two medical men. Fig. 1 is the profile of Neem Chaund, and forms a striking contrast to No. 2, the profile of a barber-surgeon, who was born of low-caste parents, that had for generations received no education, and got their living by shaving, cleaning the ears, trimming the nails, inoculating the small-pox, performing phlebotomy, extracting teeth, and assisting at certain Pagan ceremonies, as that of fixing the hooks in the flesh of those who swing round on a pole at the Ratgatra. I had frequent opportunities of observing the character of this individual. He was ignorant and superstitious, but kind, affectionate, and methodical, with a good deal of cunning. Such a low branch of the healing art is not connected with any caste, rank, or religion. Still, there are individuals among them (the barber-surgeons) who acquire much expertness in such a calling. They seem to transmit a degree of manual expertness to their descendants, who sometimes distinguish themselves as lithotomists, oculists, etc."

It should be here remarked that the Voidya or Ambastha caste, to which the physician above described, Neem Chaund Doss Gupta, belonged, is alleged by the Hindus to have sprung from the marriage of a Brahmin with a Vaishya, the Vaishyas ranking as the third caste, and being, or claiming to be, Aryan. Whatever amount of credit we may give to such a genealogy, it indicates the opinion of the Hindus that the physician caste sprang from among the gifted invading race, not from among the indigenous or previous occupants of the land.

It may be gathered from the passages quoted above, that Dr. Wise entertains decided views as to the importance of hereditary influence in the transmission of mental and moral qualities. Accordingly, he visits the caste system with less reprobation than it usually meets with from Europeans. "The institution of caste," he says, "at first accelerated the advancement of knowledge, by accumulating the experience of generations, enabling them to acquire a degree of hereditary aptitude and manual expertness, and develop an extent of ingenuity, that has scarcely been equalled in Europe." Subsequently, he allows, the very system which had produced this rapid development served only to petrify and arrest it.

The two heads figured by Dr. Wise give us the impression of belonging to men differing in race, taking the word in an extended sense. The physician has a head of what we commonly call the Caucasian or Indo-European type, with well-developed forehead and moderately prominent occiput, while the head of the barber-surgeon is globular or pyramidal, short, with sloping forehead and deficiency in the occipitoparietal region, resembling in type the heads of many of the races called Turanian, or of the peasantry in some parts of Italy. We have observed this latter type in the person of a gentleman of much intelligence and education, who belongs to the Kaistha or writer caste, who, though they hold a very respectable position, and have for many generations been educated men, are acknowledged to be Sudras, *i.e.* of indigenous blood, and whose physical type has not been elevated by Aryan admixture.

PENGELLY ON THE ARCHAIC ANTHROPOLOGY OF THE SOUTH-WEST OF ENGLAND.

AMONG the difficult and, as yet, unsolved questions of the day, few excite a greater interest than the antiquity of mankind. The Anthropological Society of London was established partly for the purpose of investigating this abstruse subject, and of collecting into one focus the scattered data on which the science of man must be raised. The facts and deductions are of only recent discovery, and are still in process of accumulation. It has long been incomprehensible to scientific inquirers that the short period of a few thousand years can have completed the rise and progress of man, with all his varieties of race and language. Variations of race take place so slowly and imperceptibly that ages must pass before a clearly defined distinction can be recognised. In appealing to history for information on the origin of the Negro or the Red Indian, we find that all is blank, obscure, and uncertain. If we go back to tradition, mere ridiculous fable and allegory take the place of facts; but when history and tradition are silent, archaic anthropology steps in to assist us, and we are enabled to learn something of the habits of the early races by the implements they have left behind in the strata in which they have been imbedded.

The gravel beds and bone caverns of England and France have afforded us the most ancient traces of man yet discovered. Professor